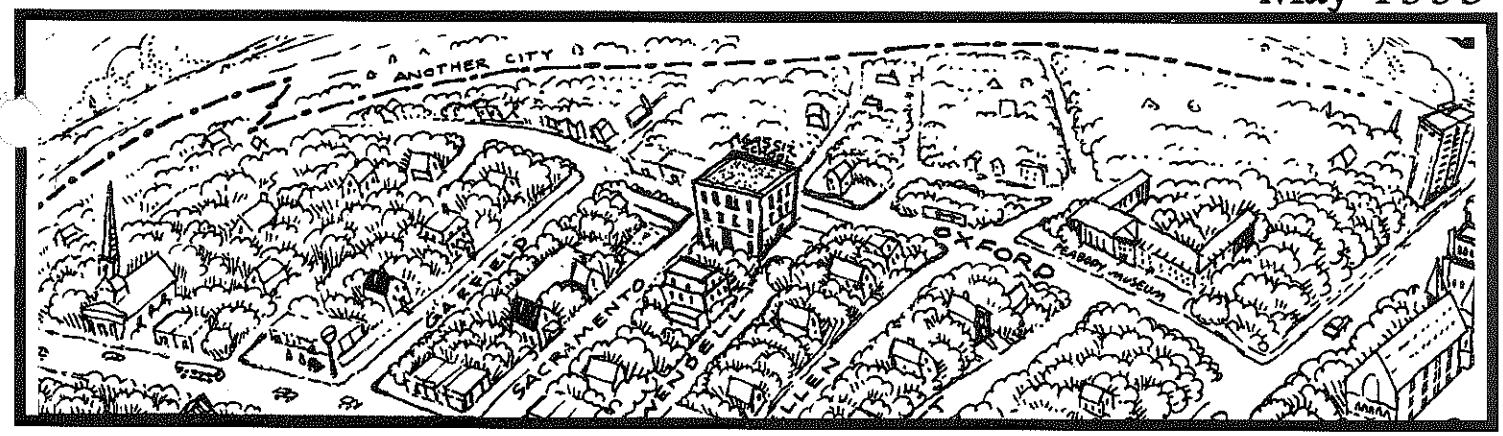
The Whistler

May 1995



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Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

ANC Meeting Notes

JoAnn Hoffman opened the 4/25 ANC meeting with one unannounced issue. The White Hen Pantry on Mass. Ave. in Porter Square is considering a package store license to sell beer and wine. The owner, Nazih Hamza, contacted the ANC for our reaction. He has not yet applied to the license board, and no hearing is yet scheduled. Members of Neighborhood Nine Association informed us that Nazih had been to their last meeting to advise them of his proposal. They developed several conditions for their support, and he had agreed to them. They voted to support the license. (See page 3 for information on those conditions.) ANC agreed to publish the information in *The Whistler* this month, and a meeting can be planned if necessary.

Introductions were made between Neighborhood Nine Association and the Agassiz Neighborhood Council. We were delighted to see Alice Wolf, former Cambridge Mayor, at the meeting.

The new initiative from the planning board, the IPOD, was the first item discussed. It is a proposal to restrict certain building activities for one year beginning from the termination of rent control. This proposal would give the City some breathing space to consider the changes resulting from the end of rent control. It would allow planners the necessary time to consider the issues and develop policy. The proposal is intended to prevent immediate conversions of residential units to other use by restricting height and parking.

Donna Condon from Neighborhood Nine asked the participants to see the discussion in the context of working toward a subcommittee for both neighborhoods that would address the issues of the Mass. Ave. corridor from Harvard to Porter Square. Various people voiced their concerns and hopes for Mass. Ave. Some people bemoaned the loss of services for residents (hardware stores, bakeries, supermarkets) and noted the change in the complexion of services available. Chain stores like the Gap and Starbucks would make Mass. Ave. like Anytown, USA.

Other concerns focused on the need for Mass. Ave. to be more pedestrian friendly with amenities such as benches and trash cans. A bike path was discussed as were traffic and parking woes. There were many creative suggestions to follow up on in later meetings.

Harvard's institutional development was addressed, specifically their pending development of the block of stores including Looks, Crimson Cleaners, Three Aces Pizza, Central Barbershop and Adrian's Jewelry.

Another major impact on Mass. Ave. in the future could be Lesley College, currently developing a Master Plan that includes Porter Exchange. Lesley's acquisition of Porter Exchange includes the property across the street currently used as parking. The current thinking for the Master Plan is that Lesley will consolidate in two areas, Porter Exchange and the Mellen Wendell Everett St. area. This would include divesting themselves of other property in both Agassiz and Neighborhood Nine. Agassiz asked Neighborhood Nine to send a representative to the committee of Lesley and Agassiz representatives currently meeting.

Participants stressed the need for planning, and a joint group could begin to address many of these quality of life issues for both neighborhoods. Alice Wolf suggested that the neighborhoods could form a kind of Policy Statement for Mass. Ave. that would address the important issues. This would allow the neighborhoods to work from that document, and not on an ad hoc basis every time an issue came up on Mass. Ave. It would put the neighborhoods in control and make it easier for the City to help the neighborhoods realize their goals.

The issue of housing after rent control was the last joint neighborhood item discussed. There is currently concern over the policies presented by Harvard in the Agassiz neighborhood. Neighborhood Nine felt that Harvard did not own much property there, but many were concerned about

Upcoming Council Meetings

Next Agassiz Neighborhood Council Meeting
Community Room 1651 Mass. Ave. (at Wendell St.)
7:30 p.m.

ANNUAL MEETING
May 17, Wednesday

After the Election, talk to the board and let them know your thoughts on the neighborhood. Visit with your neighbors and enjoy dessert and coffee.

Do You Use Mass. Ave.?

Everybody does. Join with members of Agassiz and Neighborhood Nine to discuss how we can best influence development along Mass. Ave. between Harvard and Porter Squares. A committee is now being formed to consider policies on parking, traffic, pedestrian friendliness, institutional and commercial development, beautification, and more. Bring your own concerns. Call Terry DeLancey at the ANC, 349-6287 and get your name on our list.

the changes rent control may bring from the sale of condos. Howard Medwed said he believed that since the issue was so big, it would best be handled with help of the City. There are, however, representatives in each neighborhood working on tenant issues.

The last item of business was the announcement of ANC Board candidates who will be elected in May at the Annual Meeting. The only new candidate will be **Christa Evereteze,** who lives on Prentiss St. Her resume was available, and more on all the candidates will appear below.

Last Month in this column, traffic issues discussed at the March council meeting were reported. These issues were then forwarded to Deputy City Manger Rich Rossi for resolution:

1). Oxford Street be opened September 1
2). Oxford Street have barriers not easily moved
3). Signs at Oxford and Beacon and Oxford and Kirkland be more visible, preferably with the wording "No through street"
4). Provide bicycle lanes in the street where Oxford is closed
5). Provide spot enforcement by police on all detour streets to prevent speeding and enforce stopping
6). Replace any missing signs
7). Work out safety on Garfield St. at Mass. Ave. and at Oxford St. corners

Mark Woods, who had attended the March meeting, stopped by the council office to request that number 7 on the list be amended to include his specific suggestion that **a three way stop be created at the Garfield Oxford Street corner with stop signs and crosswalks** as he had requested at the council meeting. The specific suggestion has been added as number 8 and has been referred to Mr. Rossi's office.

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Neighborhood News

Board Candidates Announced

The Slate of Candidates for Board of Directors has been announced for 1995-97. These candidates will be elected for two year terms as directors.

Janet Rustow
Sue Bergin
Steve Kosslyn
Christa Evereteze.

Officers are elected for one year terms:

Chairperson JoAnn Hoffman
Vice Chairperson Steve Kosslyn
Secretary Sue Bergin
Treasurer Fred Levy

Kathleen Manion, Fred Willey and Joan Squeri (Parent Representative) will all serve the second year of a two year director term next year. A second Parent Representative will be elected by the Parent Steering Committee in June.

Meet the Candidates

Sue Bergin-Sue lives on Mellen Street. She had two children at the Agassiz School, and Sue is currently working on the Program Committee of the ANC. Sue works in a photo lab, and she has done extensive photo documentation of the old Agassiz School.

Christa Evereteze-Christa lives on Prentiss Street and she has a son in the second grade at Agassiz School. This will be Christa's first term on the Board of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council. Christa is a certified paralegal, and she currently works at the JFK School of Government in the Innovations in American Government Program. She is a member of the Agassiz School Diversity Committee.

Steve Kosslyn-Steve lives on Garfield Street. He has been active on the Long Range Planning Committee, and is the Chair of the Committee now working on the Garfield Street Housing with Cambridge Housing Authority. Steve is a psychologist at Harvard.

Janet Rustow-Janet is a resident of Sacramento St. She has a daughter at the Agassiz School. Janet continues her role as Chair of the Committee dealing with the Agassiz School construction. Janet is a social worker at the Faulkner Breast Clinic.

Fred Levy-Fred lives on Eustis St. and has two children in the Agassiz School. Fred is a member of the Agassiz School Building Committee, and he is on the board of Temple B'Nai Brith, where he is treasurer. In the early 80's Fred led the Mass. Ave. down zoning effort. Fred is also a small business owner in Cambridge.

JoAnn Hoffman-JoAnn lives on Gorham St. and has a son at the Agassiz School. She recently received a Master's Degree from U. Mass. Boston's McCormack Institute. JoAnn is currently Chairperson of the ANC.

White Hen Pantry Seeks License

The ANC was contacted by Nazih Hamza, owner of the White Hen Pantry on Mass. Ave. in Porter Square. He wanted Agassiz to consider his proposal for a package store license to sell wine and beer in his store. He has not applied with the License Commission, and wants to be sure the neighborhoods will have no problems with his application before he does.

Nazih attended a meeting of the Neighborhood Nine Association where this proposed license was discussed. Neighborhood Nine has made four conditions for the license, which Nazih has agreed to accept:

1). There should be no permanent outdoor sineage in respect to wine and beer sales.
2). Liquor sales should account for no more than 25% of the business
3). Liquor cannot be sold after 11 PM
4). When the license is sold, it will remain with Nazih and not revert to the White Hen Pantry.

If neighbors have any further concerns, please call the ANC at 349-6287. If there is enough concern voiced, a meeting will be planned.

Harvard Announces Plans for Rent Control Properties

(submitted by Joanne Preston)

Last week, Harvard Real Estate, Inc. sent three representatives to the *Cambridge Chronicle* to inform the paper of its plans for its over 700 formerly rent-control units. According to *The Chronicle*, they plan to turn many of their large buildings into affiliated housing and sell some of the wooden gram buildings while keeping others for "future institutional use." This report also makes some vague references to the sale of a few properties to the city for affordable housing.

How and when Harvard disposes of its real estate is of upmost importance to the Agassiz neighborhood because of the number of buildings it owns in our neighborhood (at least 28), because of the problems caused by large numbers of students living in residential neighborhood and because of the many elderly long-term residents who are currently being displaced with the end of rent control.

In informal meetings, some tenants and homeowners have formulated three areas of concern:

1). housing in Agassiz for the displaced elderly that Harvard could sell at a reasonable price to the city
2). affiliated housing that would be available to moderate-income students and employees reducing the pressure on affordable housing in the neighborhood
3). prevention of further expansion of Harvard to maintain the stability of the neighborhood.

Residents with further concerns can call the ANC office at 349-6287 for direction to the right group or office.

Garfield Street Development

Eight members of the Garfield Street neighborhood met with Ms. Terry Lurie, of the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA), and Ms. Sally Zimmerman, of the Cambridge Historical Commission. The group carefully reviewed a draft of the "Developer's Kit" for the housing project planned for the lot at the corner of Garfield and Massachusetts Avenue. This kit specifies guidelines for developers who wish to make a bid for the project. Developers must offer a "turnkey plan," which involves their carrying out all aspects of the project—including architectural plans, actual construction, landscaping, and so on. The Cambridge Historical Commission, the Massachusetts Historical Commission, and the MBTA will all be involved in a final review of the proposed Developer's Kit. Once the kit has been put into final draft form, HUD will review it. Upon approval, the kit will be made available to developers, who will have approximately one month to respond with proposals. The CHA will shortly be giving advance notice to developers regarding the upcoming request for proposals.

The group focused on the specific description of the type of building(s) to be constructed. The kit specifies between 5 and 8 units, which will be a mixture of 2 and 3 bedrooms; the development will be for low-income families. One unit will be handicap accessible. Two-bedroom units can have up to four people (but typically average 2.5), and three-bedroom units can house up to 6 people (but average 3-4 people). Between 85 - 90% of the residents are likely to be single-parent families. The two bedroom units will be approximately 800 sq. feet, and the three-bedroom units will be approximately 1200 sq feet.

The kit indicates that the building(s) should be multiple-entrance (ideally one per unit), and that the buildings should fit into the feel of the neighborhood. Each unit will have one assigned off-street parking place. The group requested that the building fit more into the feel of the Queen Anne houses on Garfield Street than the commercial buildings on Mass Ave, and the document was altered to indicate this. The building will be visually interesting and constructed of materials that complement those used in the houses on Garfield. It was noted that there is an easement at 16 Garfield Street, which was not evident in the deed; this will be checked.

Funding for the project has been secured through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). However, this funding falls short of what is needed to meet CHA's specifications, and supplemental funding is being sought from the city. There is also some question as to whether there may be cuts from HUD. We cannot anticipate when such cuts would occur, if they do.

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The group was generally very pleased with the draft of the Developer's Kit, and with the opportunity to have constructive input into its formulation. The group was also invited to help review the proposals and to interview developers, and was told that it could have a major influence in the design stage itself.

There will be another meeting of the group on 1 May at 7:30 P.M. at 20 Sacramento Street; all interested people are welcome to attend. Call 349-6287 to be on the mailing list.

Cambridge Guidance Center Awarded $500,000

This large contract has been awarded by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health to create a Family Advocacy, Stabilization and Support Team (FASST) to support families with children at risk of hospitalization or residential placement beginning July 1.

"We are delighted to have been chosen to create this program," says Susan Ayers, Executive Director of the Cambridge Mental Health Association. "Not only will FASST make a significant difference in the lives of children and families in Cambridge and Somerville by providing community-based support services tailored to individual needs, but by keeping children with their families and out of residential placement, we will save money for the Commonwealth."

The FASST will be located at Cambridge Youth Guidance Center, a community agency operated by the Cambridge Mental Health Association, and jointly supervised by the Cambridge Mental Health Association, Somerville Mental Health Association, and Cambridge Hospital Department of Psychiatry. This is the first project of the Cambridge Somerville Community Service Partners, a consortium of six social service agencies.

Crime and Safety

Crime Statistics

We have received the first quarter crime statistics for the City of Cambridge. Serious crime has increased, although violent crime had decreased (-15.2%). The rise is attributed to property crime which is up 21.4%.

A comparison of this year to last is below·

	1/1/94-3/31/94	1/1/95-3/31/95	
CRIME	**TOTAL**	**TOTAL**	**% CHANGE**
Murder	1	1	N/C
Rape	7	7	N/C
Robbery	45	56	+24.4%
Assault	138	98	-29%
Burglary	149	173	+16.1%
Larceny	578	730	+26.3%
Auto Theft	157	170	+8.3%
Index Total	1075	1235	+14.9%

Traffic and Transportation

Traffic Department Responds to Agassiz Concerns

Lauren Preston, Director of Traffic and Parking has responded to the neighborhood's concerns from the March meeting:

The following actions have been taken to improve the safety on the Agassiz Neighborhood street in light of the continued closing of Oxford Street due to the school construction.

Additional warning signs have been installed and are clearly visible on Oxford St. at Beacon St. and on Kirkland St. at Quincy St.

During off hours bikes can ride on Oxford Street through the closed area. During the business day, construction activity is generally occupying the street

The missing signs discussed at the council meeting on March 23 have been installed.

The contractor indicated he would try to assure the barricades remained in place blocking off the street. However, since this is an emergency access lane, the barricades must be able to be moved by the Fire Department or other emergency services.

If you are interested in getting together to discuss this report or other traffic issues, please call the council office at 349-6287. There is a Traffic Committee meeting in the planning to discuss these and wider neighborhood traffic issues.

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Agassiz School Construction

For updates or to report problems, call the HOT LINE 497-4388

School Construction

Hot Line Calls

4/7 Caller complained of trucks parking in residential spaces and cones placed to save spaces for workers. Caller was asked to move his car to make way for construction. This was all happening in space not designated No Parking. ANC called the City Manager and Sgt. Ahern responded and said that illegally parked vehicles are tagged twice a day.
4/10 Caller requested that a bike path be left open as agreed to at the council meeting. Called Lauren Preston who said that bikes could use the street, bike he felt it was not safe to delineate a path.
4/11 Caller complained that driveway on Oxford Street was often blocked and made access difficult. Called City Manager's Office to advise police to help keep this area clear.
4/12 Caller advised us that traffic light at Sacramento and Oxford had not been turned back on and was blinking. Called City Manager to see it was turned back on.
4/12 Caller was concerned about contaminated soil. Advised caller that contaminated soil had all been removed prior to construction. It was the safe removal that caused the construction delay, and no contaminated soil remained.
4/13 Caller advised us that a truck had been parked night and day on the closed section of Oxford St. without a Cambridge sticker. Called the City Manager's Office who agreed to see that the truck was moved.
4/14 Caller did not like the sign that had been placed by Eastern Construction on the wall of the new school. Contacted the architect who advised that this was standard procedure. Contacted the caller and advised him to attend the ANC meeting on 4/25 if he wished to pursue the problem.
4/25 Caller said that the parking lot adjacent to the tot lot, currently used by the construction workers was full of garbage thrown around after eating. Called the City Manager's Office who agreed to provide the site with several trash cans.

Notes From the Building Committee 4/13

The Sacramento St. sewer project schedule has been coordinated with the school construction, and it will take place this summer.

Exterior masonry is nearly completed. Interior stud work near completion and dry wall is beginning to go up.

The substantial completion date is scheduled as August 28.

Sacramento Field Update

The architects have advised us that the sod will be going down as soon as the field is graded sufficiently. The fence should then be replaced to include only the grass area. The basketball court and soon to be created tot lot should be available for use this summer.

We have been asked to help police the field. Everyone must keep off the grass if it is to root properly. Please report any trespassers on the field.

School Dedication Planning

There will be celebrations in the fall to mark the opening of the new **Agassiz School**. Members of the ANC want to join the school and city in planning events for our community.

Some suggestions include a key note speaker, a photography exhibit of the old school and school construction, a souvenir booklet, an historical exhibit, a video presentation. Call the ANC at 349-6287 to join this exciting committee.

Garden Update

The City has come and improved the condition of the Sacramento Street Garden, which had a number of problems after the DPW excavation to place cable and pipe for the Sacramento Field renovation.

The electrical cable was buried at a depth sloping from 3-5'. It is up to code and safe. The front fence will be "restrung". The DPW will provide fourteen 3' high stakes to guide garden hoses. They will provide additional peat moss and composted cow manure to plots that were adversely effected by the excavation. DPW has created a pile of red bricks to replace lost ones. The City has agreed to replace all lost plants and bulbs. Trees were pruned and two truckloads of high quality loam were spread.

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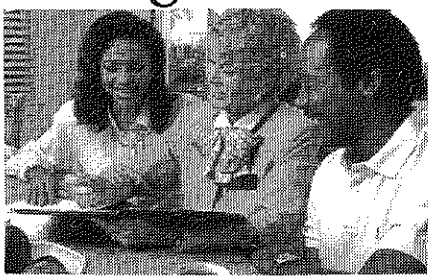

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Community School

Outback Summer Camp

Camp is filling up fast. Send in your registration forms as soon as possible to be assured of the weeks that you want. For registration information, call Jody Garber at 349-6287.

Agassiz Afterschool

Full time Afterschool is registering now for the fall. We have recently been assured that we will be in the new building for a fall opening. The new building will provide us with many more opportunities to provide your children with varied activities of high quality. Call Jody Garber at 349-6287 for a brochure, a tour or just more information. We accept vouchers and provide scholarship assistance.

Concern Voiced Over Graffiti

The ANC has received a letter requesting some help in stopping the graffiti writing in the alleyway between Museum and Francis Ave. Concern over the use of alcohol and litter from the bottles was also mentioned. Lights and police patrol, or possibly gates with keys are suggested as some possible solutions.

Can you help us with this problem? Call the ANC at 349-6287.

Lesley College

Tenants Wanted for Lesley Committee

Since Lesley announced plans to draw up a master plan, neighborhood representatives have met twice. The first meeting was with Lesley Architect Dennis Carlone, and the second was a neighborhood only meeting to make a list of concerns. As *The Whistler* goes to press, the list of concerns is being formulated, but it will be reported on in the June *Whistler*.

The plan calls for a consolidation at both the Mellen St. area and Porter Exchange, and a divestiture of property outside of those areas. Tenants from the area around the Mellen St. campus are encouraged to join the committee.

Another meeting will be held to report Agassiz concerns to the architect on May 17, Wednesday at 8:15 AM. Anyone wishing to join that group should call the ANC at 349-6287

Neighborhood representatives include: Ken Basler, Joel Bard, Fred Levy, Ellen Freidman, John Cunha, JoAnn Hoffman and Richard Griffin. At the April ANC meeting, Neighborhood Nine Association members were encouraged to send a representative.

City Wide

Community Oriented Policing Meeting

The C.O.P. meeting held on April 5th at CRLS took up a concern that has been raised repeatedly across all neighborhoods in Cambridge is the need for intervention of some sort when persons are observed who display behaviors that are potentially threatening, or who appear to be in need of assistance. This intervention is commonly known as outreach.

Because outreach can be associated with sensitive issues of human rights and human safety, it is important to develop the proper community response.

The meeting featured several panelists including Jill Herold from the Department of Human Services, Deputy Superintendent Mike Giacoppo from the Police Department, Eddie Harris, Director of Positive Edge (a youth outreach program), Mark Gray, Director of Cambridge Cares About Aids, and Betsy Snow, a Cambridge resident.

Cambridge has many services available, and the problem seemed to be how to link the people in need with the right services. Everyone agreed that all members of the community must work toward the solutions together, and not expect the police to solve these problems alone. The police can only get people off the streets. Any real help must be given by the social service agencies.

Many good action ideas were suggested later in the group sessions, and these ideas will be developed in later meetings of the Community Oriented Policing. To get involved call Vicki Boulrice 349-3236.

Cultural Happenings

First Friday Concerts for May and June

Friday, May 5th at North-Prospect Church in Porter Square, there will be a free concert by **David Chan, violin and Judith Gordon, piano**. On the program are works by **Tartini, Tchaikovsky, Gershwin and Paganini.** Mr. Chan has received several awards, including a bronze medal in the 1994 Indianapolis International Violin Competition.

Friday June 2nd Benjamin Sears will be singing Broadway show tunes accompanied on piano by **Bradford Conner.** They perform regularly in a cabaret setting at Upstairs at the Pudding in Harvard Square.

The concerts are from 12:10 to 12:50 p.m. The church's address is 1803 Massachusetts Ave. A handicap entrance and elevator are located on the side of the church that is on the corner of Roseland Street and Mass. Ave. There is no admission charge, but donations are appreciated.

For more information call 547-1448.

Celebrate the Ages May 7

Cambridge Council on Aging and the Windsor House Adult Day Health present a Gala Benefit on Sunday May 7 from 3:00 - 5:30 p.m. to support their programs and services. There will be cabaret style performances, art exhibits, appetizers, desserts and beverages.

Performers will include Ruth Hamilton, contralto, The Back Porch Dance Company, Roland Sturgess, classical pianist, the Longy Chamber Chorus and the Embraceables, led by Harvey Cox. Art work exhibitors include Maude Morgan, painter, Nat Burwash, sculptor, Lisa Houck, new senior center artist, Jerry Beck, CMAC artist in residence and Marjorie Forte, senior quilt designer.

Tickets are $20. Call 698-2506 for reservations or information. The event will be held at Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center, 41 Second St., East Cambridge.

Fifty Years Later:
Cambridge Holocaust Remembrance

As part of the remembrance, the City of Cambridge presents on May 9 a Forum: Reclaiming Histories/Creating Justice-inter-generational performance and dialogue from 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center, 41 Second St. East Cambridge. This will also be cable cast on channel 37.

In the 50 years since Auschwitz and Hiroshima, communities have passed their stories to the next generations to create a world where injustice and persecution will not repeat. This program features the Cambridge Performance Project and excerpts from Ida B. Wells read by Valerie Stephens. Panel includes survivors of the concentration camps and US internment camps for Japanese Americans. Gabrielle Rossmer's "Living Shroud" pieces will be on display. For information call 349-4694.

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Announcements

Silent Auction May 31

Join the Silent Auction to Benefit the Childcare Resource Center, connecting children and families to quality care in the community. It will be held at the Cambridge Marriott Wednesday, May 31 at 6:00 p.m. For more information call 547-1063.

CRLS Drama Seeks Donations

As *The Whistler* goes to press, the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School will be going to the New England Drama Festival, as one of two schools chosen to represent Massachusetts. They were chosen during state finals in March. The production, Eugene Ionesco's *Jeux de Massacre* featured the work of 56 students.

The trip to the Festival is an honor, but it is very expensive. If you are willing to support CRLS Drama, send a check to "CRLS Drama Fund," CRLS, Attention: Steve Hall or Jerry Speca, 459 Broadway, Cambridge 02138.

Lesley Lecture open to Agassiz

Melanie Brown, Ph.D., will present the Donna Hodgson Reich Memorial lecture, "In the Best of all Possible Health: Lives through Ayur-veda," Friday May 12, 7:00 p.m. in Alumni Hall. The lecture is free and open to the pubic, although donations are appreciated to ensure the continuation of the lecture series. Call Lesley at 349-8525 for more information.

May 1995
Community Calendar

May 1, Monday	7:30 p.m.	Garfield St. Development 20 Sacramento St. (see page 3)
May 7, Sunday	3:00-5:30 p.m.	Celebrate the Ages Gala Cabaret Benefit (see page 7) 41 Second St. East Cambridge
May 14, Sunday		Mother's Day
May 16, Tuesday	6:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	ANC Board Meeting (Public Welcome) ANC ANNUAL MEETING 1651 Mass. Ave. (at Wendell)
May 17, Wednesday	8:15 a.m.	Lesley-Agassiz Master Planning Meeting 20 Sacramento St. (see page 6)
May 29, Monday		Memorial Day

Reach us by FAX 497-4388, or by Compuserve E-Mail at 74372.1770 @ Compuserve. com

The Whistler is published monthly September - June by the Agassiz Neighborhood Council, distribution 2,000. Neighborhood residents may be added to the mailing list by calling 349-6287. Items of interest to the Agassiz neighborhood may be submitted for consideration to address below, no later than the 15th of the month prior to publication date.

May 1995
The Whistler
Agassiz Neighborhood Council
20 Sacramento St.
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349-6287

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